THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND Free from the IMPUTATION OF POPERY.

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Printed for *Ch. Brome* at the Gun at the West-End of St. *Paul's* Church-yard. 1685.

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Imprimatur,
C. *Alston* R. P. D. *Hen. Epiſc.*
Lond. *a Sacris Domeſticis.*

THE Church of England Free from the Imputation OF POPERY.

THE Caſe between the Church of *England* and the Diſſenters from it, requiring not much of Learning or Speculation; it might well ſeem to be no difficult matter to ſee into the bottom of it, and clear the difference. And indeed the Duty of Obedience in things indifferent, and the obligation of each Chriſtian to preſerve the Unity of the Church are ſo convincing, and the Expedience of ſome Ceremonies in general, and the Innocence of ours in particular ſo plain; that the Reconciliation of our Brethren to us, upon the view of our Reaſons, and the Anſwers we have given to their Scruples, might be eaſily expected; were there not ſome General Prejudice upon the minds of otherwiſe well-diſpoſed men, that like an interpoſing miſt, either diverts the light that would otherwiſe come in, or lets it not appear in its own colour. *The Impuſation.*

And this ſeems to be no other than the Opinion many men have been poſſeſt with, that our Worſhip is Popery; and

 that

that to return to our Communion is to make a ſtep towards *Rome*, to joyn company with thoſe that are going thither. For this conceit once entertain'd, a Miniſter of the Church of *England* is a diſguiſed Emiſſary of the *Romiſh* Church; and all the Arguments and Perſwaſions he offers for Conformity, are receiv'd no better, than if he was endeavouring to pervert to the Papal Superſtition. If we ſpeak to them of the Common Prayer they think of the Maſs; and while we diſcourſe to them of the fitneſs and lawfulneſs of kneeling at the Communion, they imagine nothing elſe but the Worſhip of the Hoſt, and the Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation.

By whoſe Malice and Artifice ſoever this Prejudice has been rais'd and cheriſh'd; they, we muſt confeſs, have gain'd their point by it. They have ſtopt the Ears, and blinded the Eyes of thoſe that otherwiſe would know the voice of their Brethren. The Averſion of the people deſervedly raiſed againſt Popery, they have had the skill to turn againſt the greateſt and beſt Church of the Reformation: And they have had the pleaſure to put her under the moſt ſenſible affliction of lying under an imputation ſhe ſo much abhors, and hearing her ſelf reckon'd amongſt thoſe ſhe has ſo openly and ſo juſtly condemn'd.

None can be ignorant how far this Prejudice has prevail'd, and with what ſucceſs; tho' indeed it is a conceit ſo unlikely and inconſiſtent, that we might well expect no rational perſon ſhould have entertain'd it: And did not Popery let us know what groſs abſurdities may find credit with the ignorant, it would be very hard to imagine how any belief ſhould be given to ſuch an impoſſibility, Tranſubſtantiation it ſelf being as conceivable a thing, as that a Proteſtant, really of our Church, ſhould be a Papiſt too; and any other contradiction as eaſily reconcil'd as that.

Neither can they fairly object Ignorance and an Implicite Belief to the Papiſts, who know ſo little the conſtitution of the Proteſtant Religion, as not to ſee it in our Church; and who

who reſign themſelves to their Teachers ſo far, as with the ſame credulity to call our Church Popiſh, with which the Papiſts are taught to call it Heretical.

So Cauſeleſs, I hope, and Groundleſs will this miſchievous Calumny appear to all thoſe that ſhall conſider; and all thoſe who will be willing to conſider, that do not wilfully chuſe a miſtake ſo ſcandalouſly unjuſt to a great Reform'd Church, and ſo deſtructive and ruinous to the whole Reformation. As therefore they would not be found ignorant of the Religion they profeſs; as they would not continue ſo highly uncharitable to their Brethren; nor be guilty of the Ruine of what they would be thought ſo much to contend for; if there be in them any love of Truth, any care of Juſtice, any tenderneſs of Conſcience, any concern for the publick cauſe and our common Religion, let them think of theſe things.

In the firſt place therefore, to begin with the unreaſonableneſs in general of this Jealouſie wherewith ſome men are Prepoſſeſs'd: Who would not ſtand amaz'd to hear that Church ſtil'd Popiſh, the Purity of whoſe Faith has been declar'd ſo expreſsly, ſo Illuſtriouſly atteſted and ſpoken of through all the World? Know they, or care they what they ſay, that ſay this of a Church, that has ſolemnly and poſitively diſown'd all the Uſurp'd Authority, and condemn'd all the falſe Doctrines of the *Roman* See, its Supremacy, Infallibility, Tranſubſtantiation, Idolatry of the Angels and Saints, Purgatory, *&c.* that has not done this in a corner, or in the ear, but proclaim'd it on the Houſe top; that like a City ſet upon a Hill, has been as high and eminent on the one ſide, as *Rome* it ſelf, with its ſeven boaſted Hills, has been on the other; and has as remarkably oppos'd the Errors of that Church, as ever they had been advanc'd? What a new wonder muſt this be to the World, to hear the Church conſtituted by *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, accus'd of Popery; that Faith and Worſhip ſuſpected to be un-reform'd, which was deliver'd down to us by thoſe great Martyrs? Is this the reward of a Church, whoſe Sons have given ſo loud a Teſtimony againſt

the *Roman*, in their Lives, and by their Death; who have ſtill born the burden and heat of the day; who have felt the fierceſt rage of the Enemy, and have return'd them the deadlieſt wounds; who have been foremoſt ſtill in all encounters, all along in the laſt age, and in our own, the famous and the Victorious Champions of the Proteſtant Cauſe? If this Church, and theſe Men after the declaration made in our Articles, after repeated ſubſcriptions and abrenuntiations, after all this zealous oppoſition of Popery, muſt be yet ſuſpected of Popery: as well on the other ſide may the Decrees of the Council of *Trent* be ſaid to comply with the Reformation, and the Pope himſelf be thought a Proteſtant.

One would imagine from the ſuſpitions of theſe men that traduce us, that there was ſome ſmall inconſiderable difference betwixt the Papiſts and us; ſomething that might eaſily be reconcil'd: not that we differ as much from them, and in as ſubſtantial points, as thoſe very perſons that complain. For let all the Harmony of Proteſtant Confeſſions be conſulted, and ſee if we are not of the Harmony, and our Articles do not conſpire with theirs; if ours are not as expreſs, and as directly oppoſite to the *Roman* Church; if there can be any hopes of reconciling us, ſooner than of reconciling them.

For though there are of the Proteſtants that retain not ſome indifferent Ceremonies which we have; (and that we might well do it you will ſee preſently) yet it is to be ſuppos'd they would not ſtand out againſt the *Roman* Church on that account, if the reſt were well agreed: If they could once allow their Tranſubſtantiation, Idolatry of Images, *&c.* If they could endure their Superſtitious Rites; they would not ſtick at what might remain of a little Ancient Order and receiv'd Decency; and were that all, would as ſoon return to *Rome* as we.

Nothing can make an honeſt man ſuſpect our Church of Popery, but his Ignorance what Popery is. He may take all that to be Popiſh which the Papiſts do and believe; and preſume thoſe guilty of their Superſtitions, who do not diſſent

to their whole Creed, and are not Nonconformists to their whole Practice; and in his opinion the purest Church of the Reformation must be that which is most opposite to the Church of *Rome*. But he forgets then that the Church of *Rome* is Christian, still, though abominably corrupted; that to run contrary to her in all things, must be to deny our God and Saviour; that by this Rule we must lay aside their Scripture as well as their Traditions, and neither give alms, fast nor pray, because it is the practice of that Church. He considers not that an Anti Papist is in a much worse condition than the Papist himself; and that if we take what the Pope proposes in gross and together, it is infinitely more dangerous to reject all, than to admit it.

By Popery therefore can be meant nothing, but the Corruptions that Church has suffer'd, and the Usurpations it has advanc'd. For the Faith of that Church was once as far spoken of as now its Errors are; and had she continued in that Purity, we ought to have been of her Communion: and now we are to depart from her, no otherwise than she shall be found to have departed from her self, to have varied from the Truth, and to have corrupted the Doctrine that was once deliver'd from the Saints.

Now the Test whereby these Doctrines are to be examin'd whether they are Popish (that is, Corrupt,) or no, is this, Whether or no they are Consonant to the Holy Scriptures. This being the Common Principle and Touch-stone with all Protestants, That nothing is to be Believ'd or Practic'd as Necessary to Salvation, but what is contain'd in the Scripture; and that nothing is to be Believ'd or Practic'd in any manner whatsoever, that is contrariant to it. A Principle this is deliver'd to us with the New Testament, by the first Ages that Receiv'd and Transmitted it. By this test their Additional Traditionary Doctrines fall, their Infallibility proves the greatest Falsity, and their Illimited Jurisdiction is cut off; the number of the Sacraments is retrench'd; their Worship of the Host, of Images, Prayers to Saints, for those in Purgatory, or in an unknown Tongue,

Tongue are taken away; whatever was impos'd as neceſſary to Salvation; and had no warrant from God's Word; or was otherwiſe propos'd, and yet repugnant to it. Such errors and corruptions you will find mark'd out in our Book of Articles, and there diſtinctly condemn'd.

But tho' nothing is to be enjoyn'd as neceſſary to Salvation, but what God himſelf, the Author of our Salvation, has declar'd; yet we are not to think that no circumſtance is to be us'd in his ſervice, that he has not diſtinctly commanded: This being no Proteſtant Doctrine, but the greateſt Falſity. For then no Action that is even of neceſſity to be perform'd could be perform'd, had not God preſcrib'd the Circumſtance too. Whereas on the contrary there cannot be a plainer Truth than this in the World, that he who orders an Action to be perform'd, and orders no Circumſtance, muſt be ſuppos'd therefore to leave the choice of the Circumſtance to Diſcretion. And it is as clear, that in ſuch Caſes where in private we are left to our private choice, there in publick we are to be directed by the publick diſcretion, the Election of the Superiours. Provided always that in both Caſes no circumſtance be us'd, that is contrary to the Intention of the Action, and the Will of God.

It was therefore in the Power of our Spiritual Governours after they had retrench'd, what they were conſtrain'd to take away, all that was unlawfully believ'd or practis'd, Idolatrous, Superſtitious, or Erroneous; to retain or reject, as they ſhould ſee cauſe, all indifferent circumſtantial things: which as they were not commanded by God, ſo neither were they forbidden by him. Innumerable Ceremonies therefore they cut off: Some inſeparable Companions of the falſities and ſuperſtitions they had aboliſh'd, ſome impertinent to the main action, others choking or incumbring it. And ſome too they left; ſo few, that they rather expected to be ask'd why no more; and thoſe the freeſt from offence, and the fitteſt to be retain'd. For they conſider'd that an innocent uſeful Ceremony, which had either been laudably us'd before Popery came in, or was not proper to the ſuperſtition to which it had

had been annexed when purg'd of that ſuperſtition, was reſtor'd to its innocence and Indifference, and might be us'd as lawfully now as in its firſt ſtate. And therefore though they took the liberty to leave off ſeveral rites however in themſelves innocent, and in uſe before Popery began, becauſe they were of little Edification, yet they kept up others which appear'd more neceſſary to the Church; and which at the ſame time might ſhew both their Temper and Moderation towards the Modern *Roman*, which they were forc't to leave, and their reſpect to the Primitive, which they deſir'd to imitate.

And with ſuch a view as this, if you will look upon the particulars for which we are accus'd, you will ſee how little of Popery (that is, Corruption or Superſtition) there is to be found.

The Particulars in which we chiefly differ, are theſe: Government by Biſhops, a Liturgy of ſome Ancient Prayers, Kneeling at the Communion, the Croſs at Baptiſm, the Surplice, and the Obſervation of ſome Chriſtian Faſts and Feaſts.

1. Firſt then as to Government by Biſhops, had it been a thing purely indifferent, we might have lawfully retain'd it: and our Church might have taken leave to have choſen a ſort of Ariſtocracy, as others have been pleas'd with a kind of Democracy. But take it as it is, intimated in the writings of the Apoſtles, and manifeſtly of their Inſtitution: we then had been oblig'd to reduce it, if the *Roman* Government had been *Preſbyterian*. When we found it therefore there, what reaſon had we to aboliſh it? Shall we allow the Pope ſo much Power as to make that unlawfull by his Uſe, which the Apoſtles and their Diſciples have recommended to us by theirs?

2. For our Liturgy of ſome Ancient Prayers, is it Popiſh as a ſet form? or as a form of thoſe Prayers? A ſet form is ſo expedient and neceſſary to the Church, if but for the ſake of

of the People (that they may be ſure to have no other Petitions ſuggeſted than what are fit, that their Devotion may not ſuffer by the weakneſs or indiſcretion of the Miniſter, that they may know beforehand how to prepare their thoughts, what frame of Spirit is to be brought to Church) that I may take leave to ſay, had a ſet form been us'd, not only in the ſuperſtitions of *Rome*, but in the Charms of a Magician, it ought however to be us'd in the ſervice of God. If the Papiſts, if the Heathens uſed ſet forms, becauſe it was the moſt certain, orderly and beſt conſider'd way, fitteſt for the Worſhip of a God; muſt we therefore be forbid? becauſe they did well, are we therefore to do worſe? And ſo for the Prayers themſelves, they are moſt of them elder than Popery, and no more Popiſh than the Lords Prayer. And if there are any of their compoſure; yet if they are good, and according to the will of God, why may they not be offered to him by us, as well as by them? Nay, may they not be more acceptable to God, as they may be a teſtimony how willing we would be to keep the Unity of his Church; and to joyn with all Chriſtians, were we permitted, in all their Devotions? If our Accuſers would ſhew us any Popery in our Prayers, they ought to ſhew us where we pray to any but God, or for any thing for which we want his Warrant; where we uſe any Interceſſion, but our Saviours; or what part of our *Engliſh* Language, is an unknown Tongue.

3. The *Surplice* is nothing but an Innocent Habit made of Linnen, which is appointed to be the Dreſs of the Prieſt when he officiates. It cannot but be acknowledg'd, that it is a fit point of Decency to aſſign all that are in Orders ſome certain faſhion of Garment in publick, if but in the ſtreets, and when they appear abroad. And if this be a Gown, and the Papiſts wear one too, is a Gown therefore Popiſh? In like manner as the Miniſters of the Church are directed to an Uniform Decency abroad; ſo particularly, and with the ſame innocent intention they are order'd to wear a diſtinct Robe, when they perform the Publick Service in the Church: That as the Common Devotion is adminiſtred by a Perſon ſet apart, in a Place, and at a Time ſet apart, ſo it may be

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done too in a peculiar Garment. And if the Papiſts do ſo too, even ſo let them; they do well. If they had invented the Garment, we need not have ſcrupled to follow this one *Italian* Faſhion. But they took it up from earlier Cuſtom, and it is no more Popery, then the Miniſters, then the Citizens, the Lawyers, or the Judges Garments. If they could ſay we placed any Sanctity in it, attributed any Efficacy to it, it would be ſomething: but as we uſe it, it may as well be a piece of Popery, to be at Church with a Band, or with a Crevat.

4. Kneeling at the Communion is far too from being Popiſh; that is, either a Corruption or Superſtition. The Papiſts indeed kneel to the hoſt, as to their God: but not ſo particularly then, when they Recive it, as when immediately after Conſecration, it is Elevated, and ſhewn to them for that purpoſe by the Prieſt. But we that Kneel when we Receive the Communion, Kneel not *TO IT*, but *AT IT*. And what Poſture can there be fitter for thoſe, that in the deepeſt ſenſe of their own great Unworthineſs, and of Gods unexpreſſible Mercy, are going to take the Seal of their Pardon, and the Pledge of their Salvation; What better Poſture would they have for thoſe that at that time are to be in the Higheſt Acts of Devotion; the moſt Relenting Contrition, and the greateſt Thanksgiving? If on that Occaſion the Papiſts Kneel too, and with a Wrong Intention; why ſhould any Fault of theirs hinder me from expreſſing my Duty? What they do on No Reaſon, why ſhould not I do on the Beſt? eſpecially when we have ſo ſolemnly diſclaimed them, and ſo expreſly declar'd our own. As we are not to diſuſe the Holy Sacrament, becauſe the Papiſts have made it an Idol: So may we continue our Reverence, tho' they have paid it Adoration.

5. The Croſs in Baptiſm, or rather after Baptiſm, has in it as little of Popery too. To Worſhip the Croſs, to Aſcribe any Vertue to the Sign, or to promiſe ones Self any Defence from it, may be Popery: but to Uſe it as a Sign, only to ſignifie and declare, can never come under

 that

that Notion, nor be term'd Superſtition; no more than it would be to pronounce the Word. Tho' the Croſs was *Foolishness to the* Greeks, *a Stumbling-block to the* Jew; and has been ſince to the Papiſts too, a Stumbling-block and an Idol; yet are we ſtill to Glory in it, and to have the Memorial of it in a high and precious Eſteem: neither concern'd on one hand at the Gentiles Mockery, nor on the other at the Roman Superſtition. The Primitive Chriſtians, it is certain, Us'd this Sign in the Earlieſt Times, very frequently: with that on all Occaſions they put themſelves in mind of our Saviour's Suffering for them; and with that they Arm'd themſelves againſt their own. So they Saluted their Brethren, and ſo they Defied the Heathen. It was the common Token and Mark of thoſe that belong'd to Chriſt; and was afterwards the Imperial Banner of the Great *Conſtantine*, the firſt Chriſtian Emperour, and under that (by the Grace of God) were thoſe Victories obtain'd, that put an end to the Heathen Perſecutions. Our firſt Reformers therefore finding the Croſs of Chriſt made the Subject of much Superſtition among the *Romaniſts*, its Image Worſhip'd, and I do not know what Vertue imputed to the Signs; and yet remembring withall the Devout Practice of the Firſt and Beſt Ages; as they abhorr'd to Countenance the one, ſo they were tender too of Condemning the other: and in that Intention, after the Sacrament of Baptiſm is Adminiſtred, the Prieſt is Order'd, when he declares Audibly the Admiſſion of the Child into Chriſt's Flock; to declare Viſibly too by that known bleſſed Sign, what that Shame is the Chriſtian ought to deſpiſe, how he is openly always, and as it were on his Forehead to bear the Profeſſion of his Faith, what that Banner is, under which he is now Liſted, and in what Warfare he ſtands Engag'd. Our Church applying that to its members once at leaſt in their Lives, which the Primitive repeated ſo often; and doing that on ſo proper an Occaſion, which heretofore had been done on all, in hopes of being excus'd on the part of the Ancient Chriſtian, by its Care to avoid the Faulty Practiſe of the Papiſts; and in hopes of being juſtified to its Members and Brethren,

Brethren, by ſo Great, and ſo Reverend an Authority. And that it might be impoſſible for any Stander by, how weak ſoever, to fall into any Superſtition himſelf, or to ſuſpect it in the Miniſter; he never uſes the Action Dumb, but Proclaims the Edifying Signification, and ſpeaks out in plain words the wholſome meaning. A Sign This, Nobly and Generouſly taken up by the Elder Chriſtians, in the midſt of their Blaſpheming Heathen Neighbours; own'd now with like Courage under the inſulting Mahumetan: A Leſſon as neceſſary for that part of *Chriſtendom* that confines now upon the *Turk*; not to be look'd upon as Unreaſonable or Improper, by thoſe Nations that, by the Mercy of God, have yet a better Neighbourhood: always of great Edification to the Devout, but particularly to be remembred by thoſe whom Commerce carries into remoter Countries: where tho', if Report miſtake not, it has by ſome been moſt ſcandalouſly forgot. So Clear and Free is the Sign of the Croſs, as Us'd by us, from the leaſt ſhadow of Superſtition.

6. Laſtly the Faſts and Feaſts of the Church come as unjuſtly under the ſame groundleſs imputation. The time of aſſembling, is a Circumſtance of our Worſhip that cannot be left to particular choice, but muſt be determin'd in Common: and what is to be done at that time, muſt be determin'd too in an Orderly Aſſembly: ſo that it muſt be left to the Diſcretion of the Governours, when we are to keep a Feſtival, and when a Faſt. As to the Keeping of the Lord's Day, our Church was not at Liberty: without ſhe would have raſhly departed from Apoſtolick obſervation, and the Continued practice of all Ages and Places ſince the beginning of Chriſtianity. As for the Keeping of Eaſter, ſhe was too under the like Obligation: the Annual Feaſt of the Reſurrection, the Great Lords Day, being known to have been the Chief, and the Cauſe of all the Weekly. And as to the Faſt of Good Fryday, it was nigh as early as the Feaſt of the Reſurrection. They lamented their ſins our Saviour dy'd for on the Fryday before; as conſtantly as they commemorated His Riſing again for our Salvation the Sunday after. And in Order to the

keeping of those two Great Days with more Devotion, there was likewise in the Church some time beforehand set apart, for better Recollection, and greater Preparation: The number of Days in some Places more, in some less. That of Forty, no Superstitious Number, had obtain'd in the *Western* Country; and therefore was still kept: and would to God it were as Religiously observed, as it was Piously appointed. *Whitsunday* too, the Day on which the Holy Ghost descended, was Observ'd Always, and Universally by the Ancient Church. Only the Nativity of our Saviour was of later remembrance, but yet before *Popery* came in: First observed in the *Western* Church; and afterwards taken up by the *Eastern*, in St. *Chrysostom's* time, as it stands recommended by him to the People of *Antioch*. Other times besides these have beeen Appointed too for our Religious assemblies; which besides the general Worship of God, the Examples of his Saints and Martyrs are gratefully remembred, and piously propos'd, and those Days are call'd commonly by the Name of the person then particularly Commemorated: Not that the Worship is to the Saint, or that the Day is employed in his Honour; only because on the Occasion of his Memory or Martyrdom, we come together as to Pay our other Duties to our God, so to thank him for the Graces of his Servant, and to be Edified and instructed by the Example. It is true the Church heretofore, when God had been bountiful to them in the Number of his Saints, increased in some proportion those Days of his Worship: and it is to be Confessed that *Popery* had both acknowledged Saints to God, which he might not own, and gave the True Saints an Honour, which they must disclaim. But with us the Number of those Days is not greater then that the Affairs of the World may well comply; and as the Number of the Apostles is not large, so their Sanctity sure is unquestionable: and then on those Days we neither Beseech by their Merits, nor Recommend our Selves to their Intercession. You see then how unreasonable the Objection of *Popery* is here too: but see to what absurdity it goes on. First it is Suppos'd *Popery* to keep a Day in the Memory of an Apostle, and

and then it is thought as *Popiſh*, to call him a Saint. A Great perſon at *Geneva*, it ſeems, preſum'd it ſomewhat *Popiſh* to Obſerve Sunday it ſelf: and conſider'd about Changing the Day. Nay ſome are ſo perverſely Superſtitious on the other hand; as that That day, on which all the Chriſtian World remembers our Saviour's *Bitter Paſſion*, has ſeem'd to them the fitter for a Feaſt; and the Time Univerſally now ſet apart for the Joyful Memory of his Bleſſed Nativity, the more proper for a Faſt. This indeed is not like the *Papiſts*: No, it is like a *Jew*, or a *Heathen*.

So I hope it has ſufficiently appear'd, how little guilty thoſe Uſages are of the Popery of which they are accus'd: the chief deſigns of theſe Papers. But having not been able to diſcourſe of their Innocence without ſome diſcovery of their uſe, I ſhall crave the Readers patience for a ſhort digreſſion, wherein he may ſee that the firſt Governours of our Reform'd Church did not only uſe their Liberty, and impoſe them as things indifferent; but as things expedient, and to which they were oblig'd in all Godly Prudence.

For altho' the Perſons who now enforce this account may think ſo much of themſelves as that the weakeſt of their Poſſible Jealouſy ought to have been conſider'd moſt; yet the Firſt Reformers were not to engage themſelves in a task ſo endleſs, nor to content themſelves with ſo narrow a view; ſeveral other reſpects more weighty, and things more practicable did expect their care.

For in the Reformation there were more conſiderations to be had, then ſome are pleaſed, or capable to underſtand. There was a Regard to Truth, to Increaſe of Piety, to Gravity, and Decency, to Antiquity; to All the Modern Churches, the Roman it ſelf, the Grecian, and the then Reform'd: Regards then had, and ever ſince to be continued. They were indeed to provide in the firſt place, that their preſcrib'd Rites ſhould be ſuch as might not in any manner reaſonably offend their own members, but be the moſt fit to raiſe and promote

promote their Devotion: They were too at the ſame time to take care, that no offence ſhould be given to other Churches, no juſt ſcandal even to that they left.

For as to the Church of *Rome*, tho' we were forc'd to part from Her, it was to be with all Chriſtian meekneſs and Charity; with a deſire that ſhe would return to Her ſelf and us; and would at laſt follow the Reformation, which ſhe had been often deſir'd to begin. And therefore when we cut off Her Corruptions and Superſtitions, we retain'd ſome of her moſt Laudable and Antient Ways; not leaving them tho' Godly and Venerable, becauſe Practis'd by Her, as the Spirit of Oppoſition would have directed; but for that Cauſe the rather practiſing them our Selves, as it was fit for Chriſtians and Brethren. All the Innocent Ceremonies indeed we did not keep; becauſe their Number was Exceſſively great, and they of ſmall or no Edification. Tho' under that Burden we could have been content to reſt, had that been the Only Diſpute, and were it to have been the Condition of our Peace. But the Tyranny of their Corruptions, by which they forc'd us out of their Communion, having reſtor'd us to our Firſt Liberty, and taken off that Humane Right or Uſurpation by which their Biſhops pretended Authority over Ours (from a Preſcription whoſe Date we know); we us'd then that Liberty too in other matters: and both ſhew'd that we were not under Bondage, and that we were in Charity; leaving that Church a Pattern for Her to imitate, and Uſing towards her a Temper by which ſhe was not needleſly provoked.

So did the Firſt Reformers diſcharge their Duty towards the *Roman* Church: by this Conduct giving to the Sober and Well minded all reaſon to commend us, and taking away from the Reſt all occaſion to Blaſpheme: reducing themſelves in all Material Points, to the Standard of the *Primitive Church*; and in leſſer matters taking leave to vary, as ſeveral Countreys then of the ſame Ages had us'd to do: in hopes that other Nations would by the Grace of God

God be at laſt invited by ſo fair an Example; we not propoſing our ſelves ſo much, as the Ancient Church to their Imitation.

The ſame Apology might too be Satisfactory to the *Greek* Church; from whom if we differ in Doctrines or Worſhip, it was becauſe we preſumed our ſelves conſtrained by the Truth ſo to do: but that we affected not wantonly an unneceſſary Contrariety, they might perceive by our chooſing ſome ſuch Cuſtoms as had the general Approbation, and by conforming to Ancient Uſage. A Church of another Climat not being to expect that we of the *North-Weſt* ſhould Agree in all; but that it might appear by Common Practice of ſome things, that it was not out of Oppoſition that we had abſtained from the reſt.

Such Reſpect there was to be to the *Roman* and *Greek* Churches: there was too a conſideration of the Reform'd, the *Lutheran*; a chief regard was to be had to her, and the upper hand of Fellowſhip given as to the *Elder Siſter*. She firſt had Proteſted againſt the *Romiſh* Corruptions, ſtood the dangerous Shock of *Papal Tyranny*, and boldly advanc'd a Reformation; which too ſhe Planted wide, and Setled in very Powerful Countrys. This Noble Example our firſt Reformers followed: from Them they learn'd to caſt off all Modern Uſurpation, and to reſtore according to the Earlier Pattern: not taking our Copy indeed from theirs, but from the ſame antient Original, tho' with ſome difference, yet with a near reſemblance. Our Epiſcopacy by the Piety of our Princes was left more Entire, than with Them in ſome Places. The Doctrine of *Conſubſtantiation*, which determines the Mode of Chriſt's Real Preſence at the Time of Participation, we were not Satisfied in; but yet as they condemn'd the Idolatry and Superſtitions of the *Popiſh Tranſubſtantiation* equally with us; ſo did we equally with them Adore the Myſtery of the Holy Sacrament, and were ready to Communicate on our Knees. After their Example our Churches and Cathedrals were not Neglected, the Places where Gods Honour dwells;

dwells; nor His Altars, where His Mercy and Love ſhew themſelves forth. The Worſhip of the Soul was Commanded to be expreſs'd in the Poſture of the Body; The Bowing to the Holy Name of *JESUS* recommended; and a decent Gravity every where kept up, tho' with fewer Ceremonies.

So Serviceable were theſe Orders of ours in reſpect of the reſt of *Chriſtendom*, and ſo fit to be retain'd for their Edification in Love (the Fruit of which we had the Satisfaction to reap, not only from the Approbation of thoſe our Brethren, not ſo well Satisfied elſewhere, but from the Confeſſion even of ſome *Romaniſts* themſelves.) They were too as Proper for our own Edification, and for the Advancement of Gods Worſhip here.

To that Purpoſe theſe Rules were as exactly fitted, as if it had been the only Deſign. For what could have been better deſign'd for the Honour of God, and Increaſe of Religion amongſt Men, then that the People ſhou'd be Ordered (had it not been their Cuſtom before) Solemnly to meet to pay their Devotions on certain Days of the Week; that there ſhould be Annual Commemorations of the Myſteries of our Redemption, and of the Zeal and Doctrines of the Bleſſed Apoſtles. And how could our Devotions be more Certain and Sufficient, more Grave and Regular, then under a well conſider'd Form? If the Miniſter were then in another Garment, did not the very Sight of him Admoniſh, before the Exhortation began, that the People were to lay aſide their ordinary Thoughts, not to meet him there as Abroad, but to be a Holy Congregation? If they were directed to be on their Knees at Prayers, and at the Communion; was it more than became their Duty? or a Hindrance think we to their Devotion? Or was it to be expected, that when a Congregation ſaw a Perſon admitted into the Number, and the Doctrines of the Croſs declar'd over him, as the Terms of his Reception; they ſhould be Offended that it was ſo evidently ſet forth, and declar'd to the Eye as well as to the

the Ear; and ſhould ſo far forget its Benefits, as rather at that time to think impertinently of an old Superſtition that was gone, and of Popery that was aboliſhed; than to joyn and recognize our Saviours Death, and their former Vows, and zealouſly to reſolve the Profeſſion of their Holy Faith in deſpight of all its Enemies? But on this Subject I proceed no further to the other unqueſtionable parts of our Ritual; it being plain, that even the leſſer Appointments have their proper uſe.

When therefore the Reformation began; for ſuch juſt Reaſons, and ſeveral Reſpects to others, and to our ſelves, was the Preſent Form Eſtabliſhed.

At that time the other Proteſtant Church of *Calvin*'s *Model* (that the Reader may not think it forgot above) was but juſt ſet up in the narrow Territory of *Geneva*; and therefore, indeed, not much conſidered by our Reformers; only under their general Rule, that as they begg'd leave in Indifferent things to uſe their own Liberty, ſo they impos'd not on other Churches. By our leave therefore the Reformers of that place might have us'd fewer Ceremonies, and thoſe of their own Invention, ſo they would be pleaſed not to dictate their Regulations as neceſſary Rules to us: Nay, even there, where otherwiſe we might think they had gone too far, the neceſſity of their Circumſtances might have pleaded for them; provided they preſcribed not their Orders and Diſcipline to foreign Countries. Though therefore they had abrogated Epiſcopacy, though Lay-Elders, and Lay-Deacons were Novelties in the Church of Chriſt, though a Liturgy of Prayers was wanting, and they ſeemed in ſeveral things to condemn the Ancient Church too much: yet they were ſtill regarded by us as Brethren, their Correſpondence deſired, and Communion with them maintain'd.

But when the Neighbourhood of *Geneva* had, with the Doctrine of the Reformation, carried this peculiar Diſcipline into *France*: It began thence to come over hither as a Mode, and to take, it may be, the more becauſe it was new. And then it was urg'd, not as convenient to the Circumſtances of a little Town, or of a ſcatter'd diſtreſſed Peo-

ple under Popiſh Biſhops, but as neceſſary to all that profeſſed the purity of the Goſpel: And it was given out to be as fit to reform from us to them, as it was before from the Pope to us. The firſt Rule of this new Method (I mean as imported and Tranſlated to us) was, to have no Circumſtance in Divine Worſhip, that was not expreſly determined in Scripture. By this Rule they cut off all our Eſtabliſhments, as they thought, at once; but by this they could have none of their own; for their Elders were not to be found in the Text, conſidered better; and unordain'd Annual Deacons had as little ground, not to mention their leſſer Rites. That Rule therefore failing, they were to have another meaſure of Purity; and that was, to be at the greateſt poſſible diſtance from the Church of *Rome*: And then we were to have no Biſhops, becauſe the Pope was one; we were not to pray to God at ſet hours, or by a ſet form, becauſe the *Papiſts* did; we were to have no Chriſtian Faſts or Feaſts; and all our Obſervations, though never ſo Edifying and Primitive, were to be laid aſide by thoſe that would be Pure, if they had been us'd at *Rome*.

We have already, though briefly, diſcovered the falſity of Both thoſe Principles. The Firſt was a groſs Falacy put upon the People by their Teachers; who to the great Maxime of the Reformation, That no neeeſſary Chriſtian Doctrine was to be received nor warrantable by Scripture; had Sophiſtically joyn'd this great Untruth, That no Circumſtance of Worſhip was to be us'd that could not be ſhewed there. The other too, that condemn'd indifferently all the Practices of the *Roman* Church whatever, was nothing elſe but a Sophiſtical Impoſture put in the place of this Truth, That none of its Corruptions were to be retained; it was nothing but a diſingenuous unchriſtian abuſe of good Peoples Zeal; to make them diſlike the good uſages of ours and the ancient Church, with the ſame warmth they rejected the Depravation of the *Roman*.

Either of theſe two Principles, if they had been true, would have put an end to this Diſpute about Church Ceremonies; and therefore, though Baffled and Confuted, they failed not to be always inculcated into the Ears of the Peo-

ple.

ple. To prove the Rites of our Church unlawful ſtep by ſtep, had been a troubleſome Task, and might not have ſucceeded well; either the People might not have born the length of their Diſcourſe, or ſeen through the weakneſs. But here to cut the work ſhort, they had a Maxime or two. that their Followers might eaſily graſp, and it may be as eaſily ſwallow. And accordingly one, or both of theſe, the People were always taught to believe. Theſe were the little lumps of Leaven that were caſt in, and all along fermented the Nation, till the whole was Leavened; and they were work'd up at laſt to the utmoſt Perfection, and moſt exalted ſtate, to the Holy Covenant; whoſe great ends forſooth were, to pluck up Epiſcopacy Root and Branch as Popiſh, and to Eſtabliſh Presbitery, the Form of Gods own appointment.

But theſe Falſe Principles could not be fixed ſo; they were purſued by their own Party, and run down in Fact. For as to the Firſt, there roſe up thoſe that could no more ſpye out Presbyterianiſm in the Bible, than they had been ſuffered to ſee Epiſcopacy before: Miniſtry and Tythes were not to be found in the Goſpel, they ſaid: They asked You your Text for every thing you did; for ſaying you rather than Thou; for taking off the Hat before God or Man. And ſo as to the other Maxime, it was found out at laſt, that *Geneva* it ſelf, was not far from *Italy*; and Claſſes and Synods (who would have thought it?) were eſteemed a little *Popiſh* too; if they valued themſelves on their diſtance from *Rome*; there were thoſe that could go farther than they. The Independents preſently outwent them: theſe were outſtripped by others; and at laſt the Quaker ſeemed before them all, but all things moving Circularly, theſe laſt came very nigh to that point on the one ſide, from which they were moſt remote on the other; inſtead of one pretending infallible Spirit, we had Legions; and all the Oppoſition to the Pope of *Rome* ended in this, that every Man was to be Pope himſelf.

Theſe were the viſible and palpable abſurdities, conſequent to thoſe two falſe Maximes; and thoſe Maximes have been mentioned here upon occaſion indeed of the *Geneva* Reformation; but with no deſign of undue Reflection. They being but Additions grafted on that way ſince it was brought into

England, not natural nor proper to it, though with us too closely combin'd: Ridiculous untruths of a destructive Nature, to be disclaimed and discountenanced by all sober Men.

However our Foreign Brethren of that Constitution, as they design'd their Form of Government for themselves, and not for us, for a Bond of Peace and Discipline at home, and not to give disturbance abroad; so they will, we do not question, give us leave to think so well of our own way, as not to be willing to exchange it for any other, that may in Charity be allowed to stand on equal terms, but will not we hope pretend advantage.

For Good Men, and who know the grounds and reasons of our Reformation, were at a loss, what the late Design might mean of bringing our Church nearer to the Protestants abroad (to those of our Brethren of *Calvins* way we suppose they intended) We hope the Intention was not to insinuate an unjust Reproach; as if we had not the Amity and Affection for them which we ought; did not rejoyce in their Edification, or compassionate their Affliction: but only this, to alter our Constitution into a nearer resemblance with theirs: But if any of ours desired this for Amendment, as a Farther Reformation and greater Perfection, it was because they were not pleas'd to consider their own frame well: nor could any honest man of our Church, and who understood her right, have ever Consented. And if the Design was only Political, (though the Policy appears not) yet why might it not be as fit for those Protestants to come nearer to us? But, not to stand on such terms, how could we have went nigher to the *Calviniſt*, without departing from the *Lutheran*? Our Church is already in the middle, and reaching out her Hands on either side; settled there long ago, by weighty Reason, and upon mature Deliberation: for although the word Protestant has been here at home appropriated to a Party; and the Reformed Church abroad has been still understood only for those of one way: Yet every one knows that the *Lutheran* is the first Reformed; and that the term Protestant is only proper to them, and particularly to those only of the *German* Nation. This then is the first Fallacy endeavoured to be put upon the People; that those

to

to whom ſome of our Diſſenters pretend a nearer approach, are the only Reform'd and Proteſtants in the World: as if the *Lutheran* were not to be underſtood by his own Name. The other is this, that the *Calviniſt* is ſo great, that the other deſerves not to be mention'd: whereas the other have ſtill been the far greater Number, and the much more conſiderable. Our Trade indeed makes us look into *Holland*, (where tho' the true *Calviniſts* makes not above a third of the people;) and our Faſhions into *France*, (and would to God there Numbers increas'd there;) we ſpeak much of *Switzerland*, and the Lower Palatinate: but we forget to take notice of the large Countrys that are intirely of the other Profeſſion; as *Denmarke*, *Sweden*, the Dominions of the Elector of *Saxony*, and *Brandenbourgh*, of the Great Houſe of *Lunenburgh*, and the many Imperial Cities. So that the Deſign mention'd before of coming nearer to the Reformation abroad, was nothing elſe but this: to perſwade us to go farther from the Univerſal Church Primitive, from the Major part of the Moderns Reformed, from our innocent agreement with general Chriſtianity, and from thoſe of our ſelves who are much edified by our Preſent Conſtitution; to come nearer to thoſe abroad, who (to ſpeak in the faireſt language) are not better conſtituted than our ſelves; and to comply with thoſe at home, who are certainly neither the greater nor the beſt part of us; to give way to the falſeſt and moſt deſtructive Prejudice, oppoſite to all Catholick Agreement, and to Countenance and Encourage a moſt cauſeleſs and Seditious Separation.

But to return from this Digreſſion: We have ſeen upon the View of the Particulars moſt in queſtion no Popery in them, no Superſtition nor Idolatry, no favour nor tendency to any of the *Roman* Corruptions; nothing in them that is not directed to the promoting of Gods Honour, the raiſing of our Devotion, and the Teaching of our Duty; nothing but what either was in uſe before Popery took place, or muſt be allow'd commendable even in the Papiſts themſelves.

And yet notwithſtanding all the Zealous abhorrence our firſt Reformers had for Popery, declar'd by their Writings, and confirm'd by the Teſtimony of their Deaths; notwithſtanding the conſtant continued Profeſſions of the ſame Faith

ſtill

ſtill made by all that officiate in the Church; Altho' all poſſible care has been taken to prevent the Suſpicion, and diſavow all Popiſh Intention; yet our Church is Popiſh, and we all Papiſts ſtill: The groſſeſt and the moſt inexcuſable Calumny that ever was invented.

Scandalous untruth.

We have ſeen already to what ends this notorious Untruth was firſt devis'd by the Diſſenting Party; to widen the Separation, to fix men in it, and to keep them at an irreconcilable diſtance: But I cannot tell whether it had not been more excuſable before God and Man to have ſeparated upon no Reaſon, than upon one ſo ſcandalouſly falſe. They had then only been accountable for their departure, and forſaking us; but now beſides for all this Injuſtice which they have done us, and the Calumnies under which they have left us. For ſo under the Old Law, where a man might at pleaſure have put away his Wife, and without Cauſe ſhewn; yet if he had given occaſion of Speech againſt her, and brought an Evil Name upon her, had accus'd her to have been Corrupt; he was then by the Judgment of the Elders to make reparation by a Pecuniary Mulct, to ſuffer Corporal Chaſtiſement, and not to put her away for ever. If then thoſe Perſons had not in them that Brotherly Love, which ſhould have made them deſirous of our Company; nor that Sence of their duty to our common Father, by which we are oblig'd to make our joint appearance unto Him; yet in common juſtice they ſhould have forbore their Slanders, and in reverence to the God of Truth they ſhould not have condemned us ſo raſhly, in matters that concern him. For ſeems it ſo ſmall a thing to any man, eſpecially to one that profeſſes a more tender Sence of his Duty, to accuſe one raſhly and falſly before God and the World, of Superſtitions, Abominations, and Idolatry, of perverting the Goſpel of Chriſt, and corrupting his Worſhip, of carrying the Souls of men into Error and Sin, and endangering their Eternal Salvations? Were this Scandal ſpoken of any ſingle Prieſt, that had the care of the ſmalleſt Pariſh, what Sufficient Satisfaction could be made him? But when it is ſpoke of the Paſtors and Teachers of a Great People, of the Conſtitution and Frame of a whole National Church, what

what amends ſhall be given then? For here the conſideration is not only of Diſreputation and Loſs of Honour unjuſtly ſuſtain'd, but of the Horrible Miſchiefs that have followed: Nor do thoſe ſuffer ſo much, of whom the Scandal is ſaid, as thoſe do who credit and entertain it. The greateſt prejudice is not to us, but to thoſe who on that account are gone from us; who have been ſcar'd by it into Schiſm, and Faction; have been engag'd in uncharitableneſs, and the breach of the Peace of God, the Unity of his Church, into Heats and Animoſities, into Temporal and Spiritual Diſobedience; who have been thence perverted into Deadly Errors and Hereſies, and haſtning from us have run upon Rocks, and made Shipwrack of their Faith. Theſe are the dammages of that Wicked Scandal, to be eſtimated by the Hazard and Perdition of thouſands of Souls: the loſs is to the Catholick Church, and to be anſwered for hereafter to the Great Shepherd. So big is this foul ſlander of Infinite Miſchief: tho' its ſingle guilt be ſo great, that it needs no accumulation.

Judge not that ye be not Judged, ſays our Lord and Maſter: *And, who art thou that Judgeſt another's Servant*? ſays his Bleſſed Apoſtle. So unwarrantable and dangerous a thing it is to paſs a haſty Peremptory ſentence, even upon our fellows and equals, in any thing that relates to God: it is to attempt upon his Authority, and to uſurp his Seat. He then that paſſes a Sentence notoriouſly unjuſt, what is he to expect at the day of the righteous Judgment of God? *And, who art thou that ſo judgeſt not only another's Servant, but thy own Superior, and whom the Great Maſter has commanded thee to obey*? If thy Slanders were againſt any foreign Siſter Church of God, i were a high breach of Charity, for which you ought to beg pardon of Chriſtendom: but to Calumniate maliciouſly ones own Church, and to charge her falſely with the higheſt Crimes; is a Lye not only againſt thoſe to whom you owe common reſpect, but to whom you are to pay Duty and Subjection; it is as if you Blaſphem'd your Father or your Mother.

But to paſs away from ſuch ſad Conſiderations, on which tho' the concern'd ſhould reflect very ſeriouſly; to to conclude:

clude in the easiest and most favourable manner: Those that go this way to destroy our Reputation with the Vulgar, have not provided well for their own with intelligent men, they will not after this, be well able to make good their Pretences to much knowledge, and their Profession of greater zeal for Truth. For the difference betwixt us and Popery is so wide, that those who accuse us of it, except they excuse themselves by ignorance, cannot be well allowed by the world to boast of Conscience and Integrity.

I cannot tell whether most of the Teachers are not directly guilty of this great Untruth: However, whether or no they Preach it for positive Doctrine, yet this we are sure of; there is nothing more common with their Auditors: it is this fancy that keeps them fast to their own way, and gives them their greatest aversion for us.

Some of the People indeed out of Ignorance are betrayed into this Slander: and yet there too the Ignorance is something too gross, and to easie to be removed, than that it should Qualifie the fault much. They need for better information but peruse our Articles of Religion, which are very short; and look into our Prayers, a Book in every ones hand; they need but come to those near Places, where the Law and their Duty calls them; and have patience to hear their proper Teachers: And therefore even this their Ignorance is too much their Fault, to become their Defence.

But however this Blind Zeal and weak Ignorance of the people, if it shall be allow'd in Plea for them, must it not then be charg'd upon those who have usurp'd the care of them? Those who have unwarrantably and in their own wrong taken upon them their Instruction, are they not to answer for their culpable want of Knowledge? But how careful should they be that they do not beget these uncharitable prejudices, nor dis-ingenuously cherish such untruths, that they are not the Causes of that weakness, and the Authors of their Ignorance?

For whence is it, that those People should be suppos'd to bring such Prejudices, but from the Discourses of their Meetings? Do they not there find Popery and our Church in a breath? the Rites of that Church so mention'd as to include ours? and

and themſelves flattered with the Title of True Proteſtants, to our Excluſion? If they do not there broadly call the Surplice a Rag of *Babilon*, or our Prayers the Engliſh Maſs; yet are not will Worſhip, and Superſtition, carnal Ordinances, and Idolatry ſpoken out on thoſe Occaſions? and the People given to underſtand by Oblique Reflections, and peculier Phraſes, that there is as little Difference as they have heard Diſtinction?

Hence it comes to paſs that the True bred Diſſenter will no more come into our Church, than into a Houſe of *Rimmon:* a Cathedral is a very Abomination. To be at Prayers, would be to be at Maſs: and if you ask them their Exception at the Book, they Thank God they have never look'd in't. They leave their Friends before they are buried, they are ſo frighted at the Service that is to be ſaid: as if the Parſon in white were an Apparition. And when a Relation of theirs is to be Chriſtned; tho' the Office be performed at home, in no Superſtitious place; yet they will not aſſiſt at that for which they came, and fly away from the Sign of the Croſs as faſt, as the Papiſts fancy evil Spirits do. Or if any of theſe upon Surpriſe or miſtake chance to be preſent at the Prayers; they take care to ſhew their averſion by their looks and geſture; they put themſelves ſtreight in ſome croſs poſture of body, or diſpoſition of mind: if the Miniſter calls to kneel, they will chuſe to ſit; and when the holy words he pronounces ſpeak the Worſhip of God, Praiſes or Prayers to him, they devoutly think of the Superſtition or Ignorance of the Prieſt, and ſmile at the Folly of the reſt. Such Prophanation do a great part of them take our Worſhip to be: and ſo fearful are they of partaking in it.

Theſe are the ridiculous and truly ignorant conceits of their better meaning followers: highly unjuſt to us, but moſt Scandalous to their own Teachers. But theſe abſurd fancies are not more ridiculous, than the pretences their Leaders draw from them: when they deſire Allowances for the weakneſſes of thoſe they have made ſo; and would have the Government on all Occaſions to indulge ſuch Errors as they ſhall be able to teach: uſing the old known Method, inſtructing the People to fancy Grievances firſt, and then

in their Name, but for their own Intereſts, Importuning a Redreſs.

But theſe Leaders of the Party might Conſult better for the weakneſs of their People, if they would try to cure it by better Information: and they might eaſily acquit themſelves of the Guilt of Slandering our Church, by beginning to do her Right. Let them then for once come nearer the Reformed Churches abroad themſelves; and own that to the World, which thoſe have never Scrupled to declare. Let them honeſtly tell their Congregations the Plain Truth: that we deteſt and Renounce the Popiſh Corruptions and Superſtitions as much as they; that the Belief and Doctrine of our Church is the ſame with theirs; that the very few Ceremonies we have retain'd, have nothing of Sin or Abomination in them. Let them confeſs that a good devout Prayer is never the leſs ſo, for being provided beforehand, read out of a Book, or by one in White, and not in Black or Gray; that if the People will but bring their thoughts to Church as well prepar'd as the words are, they will be heard moſt acceptably by their God. Let them own that there is no more harm in the Sign of the Croſs made by the hand, than in the word that ſignifies it from the mouth; and that men may be as innocently ſhewn one way as another, what thing they are not to be aſham'd of. Let them acknowledge that there is no more Sin intended, in being on our Knees at the Communion, than there is in being truly penitent and humbly thankful. And laſtly, to ſum up all, Let them but declare that a Chriſtian of our Communion, who Worſhips God as is preſcrib'd him there, and believes and obeys the Doctrine there taught him, is by the Grace of Chriſt in the Ordinary way of Salvation; let them, I ſay, but publiſh this to thoſe numbers they have called together (and if they are Truths, in Conſcience they are bound to do it;) they may then be heard to excuſe themſelves from the blind uncharitableneſs and unrighteous Slanders of their Auditors, againſt a Church of Chriſt, ſo fam'd and ſo great a part of the Reformation.

Hitherto I have only repreſented the ſtrange injuſtice offered to our Church, an undeniable and demonſtrable injuſtice: neither is it my intention to ſpeak of that Perſonal one, under which

which its Miniſters have ſuffered beſides. The ground indeed for ſuch a Jealouſie, is not impoſſible in Nature; but it is from the ſame want of Charity, that thoſe Perſons who are under the greateſt Obligations of Conſcience againſt Popery, muſt be thought its greateſt Favourers. If in a Multitude one or two ſingle men may have been under the ſuſpicion of having Apoſtatized; yet how does that affect the reſt of the Body, who will be the firſt to diſown and renounce them? Were the eleven remaining Apoſtles to be termed Traytors for *Judas*? Or is our Nation to be denominated from the few Malefactors of its number, which it puniſhes as ſoon as it diſcovers? We have of Church-men ſome too, it may be inclinable to the Separation: why are not the Diſſenters pleaſed too for their ſakes to think favourably of the whole: and to let us all be True Proteſtants on the one ſide, by the ſame reaſon we are Papiſts on the other? But is it not ſtrange that thoſe who have diſtinctly ſubſcrib'd to the Articles of the Reformation, at each Degree in the Univerſity, at the promotion to either Orders, at their Inſtitution to any Preferment, who have publickly read and owned theſe Articles in their ſeveral Congregations, that thoſe who have given all manner of aſſurances to the World, muſt be ſuſpected ſtill and traduc'd, by thoſe that have yet given none, of whom we know not yet, if they themſelves do, but at random and at large, of what profeſſion of Religion they are? God pardon them their uncharitableneſs: and we are to thank them, that they have not made us *Jews* or *Mahumetans*.

It may have been enough to all honeſt Men, and truly Conſcientious, to have ſhewn them the untruth of the pre-judice that has been raiſed againſt our Church, and the iniquity of the Irreligious Slander: as they feared God, ſo they would be afraid to ſpeak Evil falſly of a Church of Chriſt, and of the Service of their Maker; nay, we might hope that ſuch upon the firſt Reflection would be the more haſty and forward to return to our Communion, leſt they ſhould ſeem any longer to countenance ſo unjuſt and ungodly a Calumny. But they may be pleas'd to conſider further, not only the ſinfulneſs, but the Miſchief of the Action: and that we are not ſo ſenſible of the injuſtice done to our ſelves; And Pernicious.

as of its ill Conſequences, the Dammage and Prejudice it brings on the Cauſe of God.

The Differences and Schiſms that have happened in Proteſtant Churches have, it is known, been very ſcandalous to the Common Cauſe, and formed into an Argument againſt us. It is ſaid by our Adverſaries, that as ſoon as we fell from them, we fell from Unity and Order, and that the infinite folly of the following Separations, was but a Conſequent natural to the firſt: That it was a Spirit of Pride and Oppoſition that ingaged us firſt in the Schiſm; and that we had no Bowels for the Diviſions of the Church. See therefore, ſay they, how they break into endleſs Fractions; they are no more tender of their own Communion, than they were of ours; they part out of Humour and Fancy, and in this they do us right, they ſubmit to no other Conſtitution.

It is true, that the wantonneſs and petulance of Men has given too much place to this reproach already; but when the meaſure of a Thorough Reformation ſhall be the utmoſt Oppoſition to *Rome*, and a Proteſtant Church quarrelled and reputed *Popiſh* for ſome common innocent Uſages; then it is that the *Romiſh* Advocates may triumph well, then may they juſtly inſult. *Here*, ſay they, *you diſcover the right Proteſtant Temper; you may ſee in the True Proteſtant, and the True Reformed, the True Spirit of Contradiction*: How upon a Pique to us, they fall out with all *Chriſtendom*; and will leave the Churches of all Ages for our ſakes: Let us but uſe what is Primitive or Orderly, and we may have them as Indecent, Confus'd, and Ridiculous as we pleaſe.

For the Truth is, the Principle thoſe men have choſe does not only ſcandalouſly condemn the Churches of the Second and Third Ages; but is the moſt inconvenient that could be imagined, and may bring them into as great Abſurdities, as they indeavour to avoid. From this Maxime the Church of *Rome* may take its meaſures and manage, if they pleaſe, the humour of Oppoſition, as eaſily as a Vow of Obedience; it is but their taking one ſide, and our Sectaries are bound to take the other ſide, they are to be led by Contraries, and out of a Childiſh croſſneſs will refuſe what the other would ſeem to direct. So may the *Romaniſt* appropriate to himſelf

all

all Gravity, Decency, and Antiquity: And ſhould he reform, may he not expect that theſe would quit the Reformation?

This is the direct tendency of the Principle; and this way it goes, though the Papiſt may not think fit to follow it: However we have ſeen what occaſion of Obloquy and Reproach it gives, and what a Diſparagement and Diſ-reputation it brings on the Cauſe of the Reformation: Shameful to our ſelves, and an Offence to thoſe that otherwiſe might come to us. We may now ſee in the next place, how it operates by the Odium it faſtens on our Church, and what miſchief it produces there; how convenient and ſerviceable the Scandal is to the Deſigns of *Rome*, if not invented, yet fomented by them, and it ſelf therefore to be eſteemed *Popiſh* for much better reaſon than our Ceremonies have been.

For after the Reformation was, by the Grace of God, once brought about, and the Church of *Rome* could not hinder her Corruption from being ſeen, and her Uſurpation from being laid open; all that they in their Craft could deviſe, or the Malice of the Devil could have ſuggeſted, was to divide and diſ-unite thoſe that were gone away, and to promote Variance and Diſagreement between us. But the deſign was never more Artificial, than when they were able to raiſe a Jealouſie, that one part of this Reformation was *Popiſh* ſtill; and could make men overlook all the ſubſtantial difference of this Church from that of *Rome*, and conclude them the ſame, only from the common uſe of ſome indifferent things. The Church of *England*, they found, had manifeſted their Depravations, expoſed them beyond any defence, and rais'd up a fix'd and Reſolute Indignation againſt them. This Zeal, as long as it was ſober, rational, & well grounded, they could not poſſibly withſtand: they try therefore whether they cannot divert it upon ſomething elſe and direct it againſt its own Party; whether they cannot take this Artillery, turn it upon ſomething laudable and innocent, and level it againſt its Friends. Being Hatred to Popery is unavoidable, let the *Engliſh* Church be *Popiſh* too. So are the *Romaniſts* content, if we may come in for a ſhare of the Guilt,

Guilt, that not only part of their Worſhip, but the whole may be reputed Corrupt: and they are ready to help to accuſe themſelves in the wrong place, that the charge may fall upon thoſe that are in the right.

And now the *Romiſh* Emiſſaries have accompliſhed their errand in one ſence. If they have not perverted thoſe of our Communion, yet they have ſeduced others to believe it done: and we are become all *Papiſts*; at leaſt in the Opinion of the Diſſenter. If he may be believed, and we are to be added to the number, the *Roman* Catholicks are vaſtly increaſed; And well may they have the Reputation abroad, to be very conſiderable in their Country; at leaſt well may their Prieſts report that we are inclinable to return, and eaſy to be reconciled; when they have the concurring Teſtimony for it of the Sectary, their ſeeming Adverſary; and this, though but a Miſtake and Fame, yet has its effect: it keeps up the hope of the Principals at *Rome*, and redoubles the indeavours of their Seminaries. But they have too a more certain and real aim.

For by this Opinion they may either gain ſome of us to themſelves; or be ſure however by the Jealouſie to keep us aſunder one from another. They may hope that ſome even of our Communion may at laſt have a more favourable eſteem of the Religion, to which they have been join'd ſo long by report; and that here, as it happens ſometimes in Marriage, we may be content to embrace that Faith to which Fame has ſaid we were contracted before. But to the Honour of our Church be it ſpoken, this has not been effected neither by the Careſſes of one, nor Affronts of the other; neither out of Affection, nor Indignation. So little tendency is there in our Conſtitution that way, of which we have been unreaſonably ſuſpected. Their great hopes, I ſuppoſe, of this kind are upon the Party that pretends to be moſt averſe, and makes at preſent the more clamorous and extravagant oppoſition; for it may be rational to preſume, that he that knows not the Reaſons nor Intent of the Reformation, and makes nothing of the vaſt difference between us and *Rome*, may eaſily therefore ſtep over it, and be as willing to return to them as us; it may be enough to make ſuch a Convert,

to

to ſatisfie him in the ſign of the Croſs, or kneeling at the Communion, as ſoon as he finds himſelf Convinc'd of the lawfulneſs of that Popery, he may be willing to yield to the reſt, and may comply as undiſcerningly as before he abhorred. Such an Intention as this, we may ſee, is feaſible enough; how far it has been practiſed in Fact, I will not ſay, or whether the Quakers have not been juſtly ſuſpected.

For making of Proſelytes the *Romaniſt* cannot have a more proper Method, than to infect the People with Prejudices againſt us, and to hinder them from ſettling on the true certain bottom, the Foundation ſo well laid by the firſt Reformers, from keeping in that Church which is ſo ſure a place, and may be ſo eaſily maintained. However, beſides the Converts they gain, by the Jealouſies they infuſe they heighten our Diviſions and Animoſities, break and ſcatter us, they hinder us from joyning in what might oppoſe them; and prevail that we have no common Intereſt. Nay, things have been ſometimes brought to that paſs that the Sectarians have rather joyn'd with the Papiſts themſelves, and in publick Counſels confederated with their pretended Enemies to impeach our better Eſtabliſhment. So much Popiſh were we then, that the profeſſed *Roman Catholick* was leſs.

And now by force of this accurſed Scandal, ſee into what difficulty the Church is brought: either ingaged in a perpetual inteſtine quarrel, if ſhe ſtands as ſhe is, or elſe obliged to change at the pleaſure, and by the direction of her ſworn Enemies. If ſhe thinks fit to ſtand on her own bottom, where ſo many good and neceſſary Conſiderations have fix'd her, and where ſhe has reſted ſo long; ſhe muſt then expect the continuance of all the Diſſenting Out-cries; nay, want of Moderation reproached, and the Schiſm imputed to her, even by ſome of her own Popular Sons. If ſhe ſhall be inclinable to comply, where ſhe lawfully may, yet there the humorous Exceptions are ſo various and ſo unreaſonable, that ſhe ſees no good Iſſue; has no reaſon to preſume that the Faction deſires to be content; neither can ſhe tell what Church ſhe ſhall be at laſt, if ſhe is to alter ſtill, as often as her Eſtabliſhments ſhall be accus'd to correſpond with *Rome*.

Now

Now the Church of *Rome*, which has fix'd it ſelf invariably upon the Council of *Trent*, and for the ſame Reaſon would have its Adverſaries unſettled ſtill, moſt willingly ſees us alter, ſhift, and change; not only that the uneaſineſs, inconſtancy, and uncertainty may be verified upon us, with which they ſometime reproach us; that ours may be ſtill wavering and more eaſily drawn to them; and that theirs may be unwilling to come to us, into a Body ſo mutable, and after an who'e Age ſo little ſatisfied of the Lawfulneſs of its Rites and Uſages; but in hopes too, nay, out of certain proſpect, that by ſuch changes we ſhall be further from ſettlement than before, and nearer to the Diſſolution they would indeavour.

The Demanded Alterations it is plain, are not for the ſatisfaction of thoſe that are of our Communion; but of thoſe that are not: and by ſuch our own may be ſcandaliz'd and ſhaken; but the others will hardly be oblig'd. For when we are ready to change, not mov'd by Arguments and Reaſon, (for thoſe are moſt Frivolous and Sophiſtical) but to comply with Fancy, or gratify Oppoſition; the Humour it is certain, will be the more hard to ſatisfy; and obſtinacy, when incourag'd, will only learn to ask more Eſpecially when the Principle by which they move is full of endleſs diſſatisfaction, and has an equal quarrel againſt the whole Conſtitution. So that when they have effected one alteration, they have only made way for another; and are never likely to reſt, till they have deſtroyed the whole. Now for Example, the Surplice, the Croſs, and kneeling at the Sacrament, are demanded to be releas'd: the particular Objections againſt them are quite out of Countenance, and no longer preſſed; only that General one of Popery, or a General Scrupulous Fancy and Humour which they call Conſcience, are now urg'd. It is evident then that it is as eaſy a matter for the ſame Maſters of theſe Scruples to teach their Auditors, for as worthy Reaſons, to be diſſatisfied with more: and it is as plain that they have already taught them a general Averſion. Should they be excus'd kneeling at the Sacrament themſelves; might it not then be a great Offence to ſee the Miniſter, or any other kneel? As now they pretend an Offence at the Sign of the Croſs, tho'

tho' they themſelves look only on. Would they not think themſelves oblig'd to avoid the very ſight, and ſeparate from the Communion of that Popiſh Practice? Is, think ye, the Conſecration Prayer free from all Suſpicion? The reverence preſcrib'd in handling of the Elements, may come near the Idolatry of the Hoſt; and the whole Service accus'd for the Maſs. Is the Croſs after Baptiſme mention'd by them, becauſe they have forgot their quarrel at God-Fathers; and have a better Opinion of the Office of Confirmation? The Gown may as well be diſputed as the Surplice: Epiſcopal Orders may be thought a very indifferent thing: and are they content enough with the Rank of Biſhops themſelves? The whole Form of Prayers has its Faults: and how many are there for no Form at all? So that it is evident thoſe things are rather ask'd to begin, and break ground for further Approaches: there are neither better Reaſons, nor is there more Contrariety againſt them, than againſt the other parts of our Conſtitution: Only theſe three Circumſtantials are moſt viſible, the one upon the Miniſter, and the other at either of the Sacraments; and ſo may be ſignal enough for a Diſſenting Triumph, a preſent Eaſe to their Scruples, which they will pleaſe to accept, in earneſt of what is to follow.

Were there any juſt reaſon for the Scruple of the meaneſt perſon, or inconſiderableſt number, God forbid but the Church ſhould give redreſs. And could it have been preſum'd that the Schiſm would be heal'd by the removing of thoſe three Ceremonies, however innocent and edifying, they would no doubt have been remitted long ago. But the Governours of the Church know well what the Spirit and Genius of the Diſſent is; and to what it drives; upon what Cauſes it is founded, and the medley of the Perſons that are ingag'd in it; How ſmall a part the Sincerely Scrupulous make, and how the Harmleſs are in the hands of the Crafty, and the Weak manag'd by the Sturdy: that the prevailing governing Party are not to be ſatisfied with a Ceremony or two, but with more ſubſtantial Things; Nay that Religion it ſelf is but a Circumſtance to their other Deſigns. This our Superiours know; who want

not the Charity or Condeſcention that any Reconciler would recommend; but are oblig'd in all holy Prudence, and their Duty to the Church, to take in more conſiderations, than perchance a Private Writer may Comprehend. They are to be as innocent as Doves, but as Wiſe as the Serpents themſelves. But this is beyond the deſign of this Paragraph, the Scope of which is only this. That if things are but indifferently well, to change is alway extreme inconvenient, but then moſt eſpecially when there will be no probable Stop: That the Papiſts will be as well pleas'd with ſuch alterations as the Diſſenter; and neither fully ſatisfy'd but with our total Abolition.

So is a Change, tho' in things perfectly Indifferent, no Indifferent thing. But all things call'd Indifferent are not of equal Indifference; and particularly the change, this Maxime, we are ſpeaking of, would perſwade, which the Diſſenters endeavour, and our Popiſh Adverſaries wiſh, is ſtill for the worſe. The one pretends to ſee Popery in our Government and Rituals: the other with grief ſees ancient Order, and approv'd Decency retain'd; and the Primitive Church reſtor'd: They are ſenſible with what diſadvantage they encounter us; that here is no Novelty to reproach; and that the Truly Catholick Church is of our ſide. They have a Church in their ſight, as it were one of the firſt Ages reviv'd; upbraiding them by its Preſence, and diſcovering the Counterfeit by the Compariſon. To diſorder and confound this, is the Folly of the one Party, and the intereſt of the other: to drive us off from the Ground, on which we ſtand with ſo much advantage; to take away from her all Order and Beauty; and to ſtrip her of all the Marks of Antiquity, and Badges of Catholick Agreement. So ſhall we be that which the Enemies of our Church deſire; their Scorn and Mockery firſt, and afterwards their eaſie Prey: While having our eyes only upon *Rome*, and running ſtill backwards from her, we fall into the Snare that ſhe has laid behind us.

It were to be wiſh'd, that thoſe who are ſo jealous of our Symbolizing with *Rome* in Indifferent things, would be as Cautious in joyning with her in her pernicious Deſigns, and

and Conſpiring to the Ruine of the Reformation. If they will take their Meaſures in Oppoſition to Popery; let them then cloſe with that Church that is moſt hated by the Pope; and come in and help to defend that place, againſt which he bends his greateſt Force. And let them take care, leſt, if they know Popery ſo little now, as to accuſe us of it; they aſſiſt not that Religion ſo long and ſo effectually, till they bring it in indeed, and learn what it is by a Dear Experiment.

FINIS.